§1. Introduction

§1.1. The recent article by C. Tsouparopoulou (2012) on the role of dogs at Drehem and in the army during the Ur III period brings to the fore additional interesting insights into both the Ur III military organization (recently Lafont 2009) and the various roles that certain military officials played in the administration of canines at Puzriš-Dagan (Drehem) and other sites in Sumer. The article also reveals the limitations imposed by evidence coming primarily from a single site, in this case Puzriš-Dagan, and how new evidence, unfortunately today mostly from unprovenienced sources, enhances greatly our understanding of the existing evidence. It also calls into question the rigid position that some scholars maintain by refusing to consider unprovenienced1 evidence for their research.2 The following comments based entirely on unprovenienced data, which are excluded from consideration by these individuals, reveal the haplessness of their reasoning.

§1.2. The publication of 1159 mostly unprovenienced texts, the great majority from the city of Irisagrig/Al-Šarrākī (Owen 20133) and environs follows upon the publication and elaboration of ca. 1400 texts, all unprovenienced, from Garšana (Owen & Mayr 2007; Kleinerman & Owen 2009; Heimpel 2009; Owen 2011)4 that provided substantial new and often unique data for the Ur III period. The texts from Irisagrig/Al-Šarrākī are doing no less. Among the latter, and directly relevant to the role of canines5 in Ur III society, are those texts that

1 I use the term “unprovenienced” to mean any text or artifact that was not properly excavated. This includes numerous texts and artifacts seen on the Internet or in museum, public and private collections that have been acquired through donation, purchase, or confiscation by the authorities. I do not differentiate dates of acquisition, most of which are unknown to me, nor am I qualified to or interested in assigning any legal/illegal status to any artifact referenced in this or any other study. I find it entirely unacceptable, if not illogical, that some scholars regularly utilize data from unprovenienced texts obtained prior to 1970 (or some later designated date) but exclude from consideration texts obtained after that date, no matter how relevant such texts might be to their work.

2 It is reflected in the statement in Tsouparopoulou’s dissertation, where she wrote that, “it should be emphasized at this point that tablets appearing on E-bay or published online without being part of a known collection acquired before 1990, are not treated in this thesis and were not taken into account at all. These tablets are thought to be of illegal nature and the author does not endorse practices of using illicitly dug tablets for the study of ancient Mesopotamia. Thus, this thesis will present only a tentative view of how Drehem was organized based on material acquired only before 1990” (Tsoupoloupoulou 2008: 25 n. 32). This approach would not appear to comport with the tenants of research and scholarship that strive to incorporate all available evidence regardless of its source. I have attempted in Nisaba 15/1, pp. 27-38 & 335-356, to address some of the consequences that an overly strident application of a policy of hands off of irregularly excavated text artifacts must necessarily represent to our historical view of ancient societies, where that view is clouded enough by a lack of source material.

3 Text references below from this volume are in bold.

4 Presumably, Tsouparopoulou’s omission of the source for her statement about “Su-Kabta from Garšana” (ZA 102, 7 n. 18), based entirely on unprovenienced data in these volumes published since 2007, reflects her position.

5 Also noteworthy are the substantial new data on the care and feeding of palace lions (ur-māḫ  dequeueReusableCell), which occur here for the first time directly associated with the palace, and often in the same texts as canines. Although otherwise well known from the Ur III archives, lions occur frequently in Iri-Saĝrig/Al-Šarrākī texts and apparently were kept as royal pets, perhaps in pits or cages, in a local palace as they were at Ur (cf. Owen 1979: 63 & 2013 sub lion keeper).
document the care and feeding of palace dogs by dog handlers/kennelmen at Irisagrig/Āl-Šarrākī. Following upon the publication of Nisaba 15 (Owen 2013), the following observations can now be offered.

§2. The Evidence

§2.1. Dog Handler/Kennelman (sipa ur-gi-ra)

There are seven dog handlers known now from the Irisagrig/Āl-Šarrākī texts. None is attested in other sources as a dog handler/kennelman or serving in any other capacity in the ration distribution texts (“messenger texts”) at Irisagrig/Āl-Šarrākī. All of the names are Semitic and, except for Puzur-KU(-ku?; MVN 11, 175 obv. 4 and seal), all names appear in the Ur III corpus for the first time. The following chart lists named dog handlers/kennelmen who are documented primarily for three cities—Āl-Šarrākī, Girsu, and Puzriš-Dagan. With few exceptions, the individual dog handlers/kennelmen are mentioned infrequently by name. At Puzriš-Dagan Ilum-ba-ni can be documented over a twenty-five year period. He was followed by Is-me-ilum and Puzur-Enlil, the latter two having overlapped their predecessors at Puzriš-Dagan. Although there are overlapping positions among the dog handlers/kennelmen, there seems to have been only a single individual in charge of the dogs at any one extended period. At Irisagrig/Āl-Šarrākī the sequence appears to have been Šu-Nabar → Puzur-Šulal → Puzur-KU(-ku?) → Puzur-Šulal → Epine → Iku-me/išar → Irdum-alsin → Iku-me/išar → Rima. Their basic daily rations at Irisagrig/Āl-Šarrākī were two liters of soup/stew (tu7). Aside from two single references from Umma, it is worth noting that dog handlers/kennelmen are not documented by name at any of the other major cities in Sumer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
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<th>sipa</th>
<th>date(s)</th>
<th>sources</th>
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<td>A-ta2-na-aḫ</td>
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<td>ur-gi7</td>
<td>AS 5 vii 14</td>
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<td>ur-gi-ra</td>
<td>⚫ 47 -</td>
<td>Hirose 402 obv. 3</td>
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6 E₂-pi-ne appears to be the only dog handler/kennelman associated specifically with palace dogs.
The ugula is I₃-lal₃-lum, also known from Āl-Šarrākī; see note 14 below.
§2.2. Palace Dogs (ur-gi₂-gal)¹⁰

Palace dogs are known from only four previously published Umma texts, Princeton 1, 185 obv. 1 (AS 8/viii/1), Nik 2, 440 obv. 1 (IS 2/ix/15), AAICAB 1/1, pl. 30, Nisaba 15, 283 obv. 6 (tablet & envelope); 420 obv. 6; 451 obv. 5; 718 rev. 10. All references to dogs in this archive are to palace dogs.

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8 The name is known from a single Nippur text, MVN 11, 175 obv. 4 (IS 2/-.). There is also a Puzur₂-KU(-ku?) known from a text from the Tūram-ilī archive (JCS 38, 58 23 rev. 2 [IS 2/-.]), but this may be a mis-copy of -ku-ku' and requires collation.

9 The ugula is I₃-lal₃-lum is also known from Āl-Šarrākī; see note 14 below.
§2.3. Types of Dogs

b. ur-gi7-nita2, “male mastiff,” Nisaba 15, 54 obv. 1, 420 obv. 2

(1.) 15 ur-gi7-munus (2.) 2 [ur-gi7]-nita2 (3.) ninda-[bi 2 sila,ta] (4.) u4 1-kam u4 30-še3 (5.) [SU+LAGAB] 3 gur (6.) ša3-gal ur-gi7-ra (5.) ša3-gal ur-gi7-ra i-ku-me-šar sipa ur-ra (2.) šu ba-ti (3.) ugula i3-lat3-lum, Nisaba 15, 420

No other qualification of dogs appears in the archive. The general identification of dogs of this period is “mastiff” but there is no consensus as to the actual breed involved.11

§2.4. Feeding of Dogs

a. meat (sheep and oxen carcasses)13

(1.) 1 ad, udu (2.) u4 1-kam u4 30-še3 (3.) ad, udu-bi 30 (4.) ša3-gal ur-gi7-ra (5.) [i-ku-me]-šar sipa ur-ra (6.) [šu ba]-ti (rev. 1.) ugula i3-lat3-lum,14 Nisaba 15, 64

b. bread16

(1.) 11 ur-gi7-nita2 (2.) 1 ur-gi7-munus (3.) 2 ši4-ninda-ta (4.) ninda-bi 24 ši4 (5.) ninda-bi u4 30-še3 (6.) [SU+LAGAB] 2.2.0. gur ninda (rev. 1.) ša3-gal ur-gi7-ra i-ku-me-šar sipa ur-ra (2.) šu ba-ti (3.) ugula i3-lat3-lum, Nisaba 15, 54

c. grapes17

(1.) 1.0.0 geštin gur (3.) ša3-gal ur-gi7-ra-še3 (blank space) (4.) zi-ga gar-gar-a (5.) šu ma-ma agrig, Nisaba 15, 56

d. generic fodder

(1.) a. u4 ša3-gal ur-gi7-ra-še3 im-gen-na-a, “when he [i.e. ur-dnanše lu2 kin-gi4-a-lugal ] came for fodder for the dog(s),” 1 Nisaba 15, 726 obv. 18

§2.5. Offerings for Dogs18

(1.) 1 a-gam NE-[x] (2.) ša3-du11 ur-gi7-ra (3.) ki ur-mes ensi2-ta (4.) a2-pil-la-ša (5.) šu ba-ti, Nisaba 15, 532

§2.6. Work Assignments for Dog Handlers/Kennelmen19

a. u4 ur-gi7-ra-še3 im-gen-na-a, “when he [i.e. i-ku-me-šar sipa ur-gi7-ra] came for the dog(s),” Nisaba 15, 596 obv. 26, 597 obv. 40, 598 obv. 30, 599 obv.

ration for dogs as was already shown in Mander 1994: passim. Curiously, in the archive studied by Mander, animal carcasses are rarely recorded as being fed to the dogs. This is the only text found so far that indicates dogs were also fed grapes, strange as this might seem, since grapes are considered to be harmful to dogs. Internet sources write that “clinical findings suggest raisin and grape ingestion by dogs can be fatal, but the “mechanism of toxicity” is still considered unknown. However, kidney failure is not seen in all dogs after ingestion of grapes or raisins. The reason why some dogs are affected excessively while others are not is still being studied.” The geštin sign is clear in the text.

Offerings for dogs are well attested but nearly always they are animal carcasses. The offering of an a-gam of [] is unique.

Ca. 300 “ration distribution texts/messenger texts,” record extensive rations of meat, soup and fish for numerous members of the royal family, officials, and professionals who were assigned diverse tasks. The quoted passages are representative of hundreds of such assigned tasks documented in these new sources. Cf. Nisaba 15/1 sub “Catalogue of Subordinate Temporal Clauses.”
b. \textit{u 4 ur-gi-\textendash ra-še 3 im-gen-na-a, “when he [i.e., e-pi-ne 2 sipa ur-gi-\textendash ra] came for the dog(s),” Nisaba 15, 774 obv. 20}

§2.7. \textit{Gathering of Dogs by Dog Handlers/Kennelmen}

\begin{enumerate}[a.]
\item \textit{u 4 ur-gi-\textendash ra-še 3 im-gen-na-a, “when he [i.e. i-ku-me-šar sipa ur-gi-\textendash ra] came for the dog(s),” Nisaba 15, 596 obv. 26, 597 obv. 40, 598 obv. 30, 599 obv. 33, 600 obv. 36}
\item \textit{b. u 4 ur-gi-\textendash ra-še 3 im-gen-na-a, “when he [i.e. e-pi-ne 2 sipa ur-gi-\textendash ra] came for the dog(s),” Nisaba 15, 774 obv. 20}
\end{enumerate}

§2.8. \textit{Rations for Dog Handlers/Kennelmen}

\begin{enumerate}[a.]
\item \textit{soup/stew\textsuperscript{20}}
\begin{enumerate}[1.]
\item 2 sila \textit{tu 2} (2.) \textit{u 4 1-kam u 4 30-še 3} (3.) \textit{tu 2} bi 0.1.0 (4.) \textit{šukur 2 i-ku-mi-šar sipa ur-gi-\textendash ra-ka, Nisaba 15, 630}
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

\section*{Conclusions}

What then can we conclude from these new data and how do they add to the study of Tsouparopoulou? For one, they substantiate that dogs played a wider role in Ur III society than just for the military. W. Heimpel (1972-1975) and P. Mander (1994: 314\textsuperscript{21}) showed that they functioned also as guards, presumably at palaces, in various cities and towns. In addition, they were surely used for hunting. However, neither of these functions is explicitly recorded in the Ur III sources so far available. While the Puzriš-Dagan canine sources are primarily associated with military functions, they provide only a limited view of the role of canines in Ur III society. Thus, the new data, emanating as they do from sources devoid of archaeological context (as are all the Puzriš-Dagan texts!), nevertheless demonstrate all the more the importance of incorporating pertinent evidence regardless of when, where or even how this evidence was obtained. A policy that disregards essential data, excluded after some arbitrary date imposed by a patently political body and enforced by academic censorship, is objectionable to scholarship and should be rejected outright.

\textsuperscript{20} Soup/stew was a typical ration both at Garšana and at Irisagrig/\textit{Al-Šarrāki}. Cf. Brunke 2008: 173-175.

\textsuperscript{21} Where he interprets ur-gi-\textendash gal-gal as “watchdogs.”
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